

Old St. Louis Court House  
Fourth and Market Streets  
St. Louis, Missouri  
St. Louis City Co.

MO-  
HABS No. 31-8

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MO  
96-SALU,  
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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District No. 31

ROGERDUM  
FOLLOWS...

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Wilbur T. Trueblood, District Officer  
1520 Chemical Building  
St. Louis, Missouri

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
DISTRICT OF MISSOURI (NO. 31)

MO-  
PROJECT NO. 31-8- OLD SAINT LOUIS COURT HOUSE  
Fourth and Market Streets,  
St. Louis, Missouri.

Building consists of two stories and  
basement, with a high dome in the center.

Date of Erection: 1839 to 1862.  
Architects: Henry Singleton  
William Twombly  
Robert S. Mitchell  
Thomas D. F. Lanham  
William Rumbold  
Thomas Walsh

Number of Drawings: 18.

Owned by the City of St. Louis.  
Used by the City for Justice of the  
Peace Courts, and temporarily for  
exhibition space.

This building is of brick and stone, built  
in the form of a Greek Cross, and is in fair  
condition, though obsolete. It is perhaps the  
most outstanding example of Greek Revival in  
this District. The portions selected for this  
Survey are the Court Room on the second floor,  
in the east wing, portions of the rotunda, and  
the dome in the center of the building.

The site was a donation by two of the founders  
of the city, - Auguste Chouteau and J. B. C.  
Lucas, in 1822. The cornerstone of the present  
building was laid in October 1839, and the present  
exterior form was completed in 1862. The cost,  
including some subsequent developments, was  
\$1,700,000.00. It was built in sections, each  
old wing being torn down when the new portion  
was finished. During this period, there was a  
low, round dome. At a later period, this was  
removed and the present high dome built.

Among the celebrated lawsuits tried in this building  
was the first of the Dred Scott cases, among the  
main factors leading to the Civil War.

*Wilbur T. Trueblood*  
WILBUR T. TRUEBLOOD.

Revised 1936. H.C.F.

## THE OLD SAINT LOUIS COURTHOUSE

(p. 2)

An addendum to  
Old Saint Louis Courthouse  
Fourth and Market Streets  
Saint Louis, Missouri  
in HABS Catalog (1941)

Address: Fourth and Market Streets, Saint Louis, Saint Louis  
County, Missouri.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The following chronology of events connected with the Old Saint Louis Courthouse was prepared by the National Park Service, Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, whose offices are now housed in the structure.

- 1839 Initial construction on the west, north, and south wings was marked by the laying of a cornerstone on October 21. These wings were an addition to an existing structure which was erected in 1826. Henry Singleton served as architect and superintendent.
- 1842- Singleton resigned and was replaced by William Twombly who  
1843 served about one year. Singleton's plan was essentially completed in early 1845. Construction was directed by county judges until 1851.
- 1844 A rotunda designed by George L. Barnett was completed in December 1844 with the laying of stone flagging.
- 1847 Dred Scott sued the widow of Dr. John Emerson in November for his freedom. The verdict was rendered in favor of Mrs. Emerson. This verdict was set aside and a second trial was held in January 1850. A verdict in Scott's favor was set aside by the Missouri Supreme Court in March 1852. Further litigation culminating in the 1857 Supreme Court decision took place elsewhere.
- Patriotic meetings relating to the War with Mexico were held at the Old Courthouse.
- 1847 Colonel H. W. Doniphan and his command were welcomed home from the Mexican War on June 28. A public funeral for Colonel J. J. Hardin of 1st Illinois Regiment was held on July 9.
- 1849 A National Railroad Convention urging construction of a Pacific Railroad was held on October 17 in the rotunda.

- 1851 Robert S. Mitchell was appointed architect in December. Demolition on east wing, the original courthouse, began on October 7. This was followed by the construction of a new east wing.
- 1853 The south wing was extended.
- 1856 The west wing was remodeled with a wrought iron roof and fire-proof floors. Work on the new east wing was completed. A contract was made for an extension of the north wing. This work was completed in 1860.
- 1857 Thomas D. P. Lanham was appointed architect and superintendent on May 14. Lanham designed a new dome for the rotunda.
- 1859 Lanham was succeeded as architect by William Rumbold. Rumbold redesigned the Courthouse dome which is wrought iron and weighs 256,000 pounds.
- 1859 Ulysses Grant freed his only slave at the Courthouse.
- 1861 The Courthouse dome was completed in June. Representative documents of the year were placed in the metal ball on top of dome on June 6.
- 1862 The lunettes in the dome were painted by Carl Wimar. Courthouse construction was declared complete on July 4. Total cost - \$1,199,871.
- 1880 Ettore Miragoli supplemented Wimar's decoration in the Courthouse dome.
- 1887 On October 4 the Mayor held a reception for President Cleveland in the rotunda.
- 1930 Use of structure as a Courthouse was discontinued on June 1.
- 1936 The second floor of north and west wings was damaged by fire.
- 1940 Ownership of the Old Courthouse was transferred from St. Louis to the United States in May. Extensive restoration began in December.
- 1941 The Old Courthouse was occupied by Jefferson National Expansion Memorial offices on December 1.
- 1942 Restoration work on structure was essentially complete in July.
- 1950's The National Park Service performed extensive restoration on the art work in the rotunda. Wimar's original work is now most evident in the south and east lunettes.

An addendum to:  
Old St. Louis Courthouse  
Fourth to Broadway, Market to Chestnut Streets  
St. Louis City  
Missouri

HABS No. MO-31-8

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127